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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
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INFO RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 8529  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 7834  
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RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 9664  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 001747

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/05/2018

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SUBJECT: DRL ASSISTANT SECRETARY KRAMER'S CALL ON FOREIGN  
SECRETARY KHAN

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Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. On April 21, DRL Assistant Secretary Kramer urged a conservative Foreign Secretary Khan to be proactive in supporting human rights initiatives at the UN and encouraged higher levels of commitment with Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENA). Khan suggested that correcting the economic problems of Pakistan was a higher concern than human rights violations and that too much focus was being placed on women's rights. In addition, Khan stated emphatically that foreign governments needed to be held accountable when their citizens knowingly abuse freedoms of expression and insult others' religious beliefs, such as in the Dutch cartoon case. End Summary.

Human Rights v. the Economy  
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¶2. (C) Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) Assistant Secretary David Kramer and DCM met April 21 with Foreign

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Secretary Riaz Khan. (Note. Khan left this position on April

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28.) Stressing the importance of working together in various democracy/human rights fora, A/S Kramer noted that Pakistan had not been consistent in its support for human rights-related resolutions at the United Nations and asked Khan to encourage better support at the UN. Khan agreed that both the U.S. and Pakistan have similar desires regarding human rights; however, he quickly noted that it was misleading to couch the problems of Pakistan entirely in the human rights context. Khan suggested that a stable economy is more important currently to the people of Pakistan than whether human rights were being consistently violated.

Gender Issues  
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¶3. (C) A/S Kramer asked about the recent, notable increase in female leaders in the Pakistan government; Khan agreed, saying that forty years ago, Pakistani women did not work at all. However, Khan denied there was discrimination against women in Pakistan and said that they have to abide by the same rules and regulations that the men do for government service. A/S Kramer asked if Khan could explain the

prevalence of honor killings and other known abuses against women in the more tribal or rural areas. Khan noted, "Men are killed as well." He opined that in his experience, it cannot be the government that institutes change because then the people will not support it. If the government were to step in and work to improve the lives of Pakistani women, asserted Khan, no one, including the women, would willingly support the initiative.

Israel

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¶4. (C) Kramer commented that Pakistan seemed too willing to go along with the "unhealthy fixation" on Israel in the Human Rights Council and other UN fora, in contrast to its reluctance to vote for sanctions against Burma and Iran. The Foreign Secretary quickly defended Pakistan, saying that his government has a good relationship with Israel and has recognized its existence. Khan also opined that the situation with the "Occupied Territories" was a "major problem that no one can solve" and with all of the support that the world has given to Israel, he "expects better."

BMENA Encouragement

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¶5. (C) With the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENA), A/S Kramer encouraged Khan to engage in a higher level of commitment and urged Pakistan to participate at appropriately high levels at the June subministerial level for the BMENA October meeting of the Forum for the Future. Using Secretary Rice as an example, Kramer noted that stronger engagement in BMENA could be a good opportunity for Pakistan to become a leader in the region.

Freedom of Expression

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¶6. (C) Commenting on what he viewed as a lack of oversight by

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other governments over their citizens, Khan questioned those who abused freedom of expression by insulting others' religions. Pointing to the Danish cartoon and Dutch film episodes, Khan noted that he did not believe that freedom of expression was a license to offend others, and he agreed, for example, with foreign government actions making it a crime to deny the Holocaust. A/S Kramer pointed out that just because someone's statements might offend others does not make them wrong or illegal. Drawing lines on this kind of speech, said A/S Kramer, was a risky precedent to set.

¶7. (U) This message has been cleared by A/S Kramer.  
PATTERSON